



# CONQUEST OF THE AMAZON

By John Russell Fearn

**M**ORRIS ARNSIDE, assistant chief of the World Food Committee, could not quite believe the figures he was studying. Had the year been 1950 he could easily have thought that statisticians had erred in their calculations, or perhaps that there was some double-dealing going on somewhere—but in this year of 1962 there was no room for doubt. Men ticked their brains no more with calculations. Flawless machines added up everything to the last fraction, and they never made a mistake—for which reason the report was all the more mystifying.

"Beyond me," Arnside confessed to himself.

For a moment or two he sat gazing out of the window. Light snow was falling, driven by flurries of bitter wind. It might have been mid-January instead of late May—but then it had been intensely cold for six months and more.

Finally Arnside pressed a button on his desk and his chief assistant and deputy food controller came.

"Good-morning, Mr. Arnside," he greeted—and Arnside stared at him with prominent grey eyes.

"I'll be hanged if it is!" Sit down, Mathers. There's something I want to talk over with you."

The assistant settled in the chair at the opposite side of the desk and waited. For Morris Arnside to be short-tempered was nothing new. He lived well, ate heartily, took little

exercise, and was always volcanic in consequence. But for him to be anxious was definitely unusual.

"I've just had the reports for the first three months of this year," Arnside said at length. "They're staggering! Crops and staple foods are nearly 200 per cent. below the normal yield. If things go on at this rate there won't be enough to feed the world's population by the end of the year, and that means we'll have to fall back on synthetic products, something which the majority of people hate."

"Yes, sir," Mathers agreed ingenuously.

"I've been trying to think of some reason for this tremendous falling off," Arnside added, his fleshy jaws wagging with the emphasis of his words. "I'll be hanged if I can, though. What has happened to our own British agriculture, the Canadian wheat fields, the United States' grain-growing areas? All of them are just dying, man! Dying!"

"It has puzzled me," Mathers responded. "The reports are similar from all sources. The seasons are said to be changing. Take India, for instance, and we're right in the middle of spring. Snowing fast, and looks likely to continue. And the temperature hasn't risen much over the freezing point since December of last year. I have been gathering weather reports from all over the world recently, and in every case there is a marked decline in mean temperatures—even in the tropics. Crops, in conse-

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the needle instantly pressed a button which set an automatic calculator to work, and then she examined the result, the beamed pencil.

"I don't quite understand why the needle should be pointing down instead of up," she said. "Automatic starts in your case is certainly from where I am where I expect to find it—yet here we have a reading which shows the ground elevation is 1,200 miles away to the southwest of this spot. How could that be?"

"You explain," Albus asked, "that instrument records the nearest station, whether it be in large or small quantity."

"Certainly—and no other can register until the nearest one is removed and put out of the detector's range."

"Then the simple. There is station on or about the rocket ship from which I received you, and which is now being at the bottom of the Pacific basin. That is where the recording is coming from."

"Why, of course!" The Amazon gazed blankly in front of her for a moment. "When that mass of aluminum hit the rocket ship parts of it must have been shipped off and lodged in crevices in the rocket, by which means they were transported back to Earth. That means we've got to go back to the Pacific immediately—and go down into it with a booster until we locate the stuff. My machine can go under water."

"Albus said."

"No, can the Ultra—and I prefer to use it. After all, the only projectile more than years and it would be better if I used my own instruments."

## CHAPTER XII

**T**he Amazon switched on the radio. "World weather reports may still be being given for the evacuation fliers," she said. "If we can get in line of the conditions we can decide whether to go now or to wait for the weather clearing a little. A few hours won't make much difference."

"The radio came into line in the midst of the midnight lull, the weather report due to follow after it."

"...and it can only be assumed," the announcer said, "that faulty material or some electronic error caused the collapse. Whatever the basic trouble, many people have been trapped by the phenomenon and the radio which the stranded survivors have with them has stated that many well-known people have been killed or seriously injured. Among those badly hurt are Miss Ethel Wilson, the daughter of the space line director for Earth—while those dead include—"

The Amazon switched off, her face black. She whistled round at Albus.

"Did you hear that?" she said. "The very thing I have been fearing! A faulty station has collapsed and my sister—clashed her fate. 'When I said I would fly down with Turrington and his friends until he made it, I meant I was going to deal with them now—himself—once I've discovered how it is. That would not be a sister's sister to collapse. Others will follow. Turrington is out to make a fortune from a national calamity. That demands action and my own personal account is overruled.'"

"You have thought what it may mean if you appear among the people?" Albus asked. "You said you wanted to keep away from them."

"You say before I heard about Ethel. The Amazon was already hurrying towards the laboratory door. "What they need is to know who their interests at heart. We'll head for the Charing Cross shelter, and since we're going in the Ultra, we'll be a good idea if you put your machine on top of it. We might need both."

"I'll do that," Albus agreed promptly. "I'll join you as soon as I change into flying kit."

When the Amazon reappeared the was in a one-piece garment of black, with a belt about her waist, and was emerging from surveying his machine secured to the top of the Ultra, smiled as he watched her lift the Ultra.

"That is how I have mostly seen you appear," he said. "When wearing you

from my home world. We look kindly—in my yellow; you in your black."

"I've no time to discuss glaucousness," the Amazon interrupted him. "Let's be on our way."

It was only when the Amazon had launched her massive craft into the night—Amazon's machine being carried along—style—that she and the girl beside her realized how frightful were the conditions. The cloud ceiling was near-zero, the wind velocity 200 mph at least 1,200 feet. "The state of the manholes from the Ultra's probe only revealed whirling snow and showers of frozen rain beating on the impenetrable windows."

Inside the worn control cabin, surrounded by the soft glow of the night light tubes and the flickering of a multitude of needles on their dials, the two felt as if they were in the outer consciousness of the incalculable outside in the rocking of the vessel as it sped on its way to the outskirts of the city to the center.

To see with the naked eye where they were going was impossible; the infra-reds did it instead. Flaring the night they reflected on to an area in front of the control panel a complete relief of the dark, snow-covered London in the grip of its unusual Arctic night. There were the deserted streets, the gloomy buildings, and amidst them all, the bulk around Charing Cross which marked the entrance to the main underground shelter.

"There may be trouble when we land," she said, glancing up at Albus as he stood beside her. "That's the people but from the law officials. They probably know that I am, still alive and, if so, they'll have orders to arrest me. We'll deal with that when we come to it."

Albus nodded. Going over to the storage locker, he opened it and brought forth for him, in the few minutes that remained before landing, while the automatic pilot could still be used, he and the Amazon donned their—then once more, he, at the controls, the girl brought the massive vessel down in the deserted Strand, locked the switchboard by means of a combination lever, and then hurried to the airlock.

Once outside, with small flashlights, she and Albus faced a succession of barriers with a screaming wind and blinding snow. They floundered across the empty space where was Charing Cross and eventually gained the entrance of the station which had become the center section of London's chief shelter.

The big metal doors of the place were closed, while barriers in the main hall were being raised. The Amazon pounded heavily, and Albus did likewise. Finally a slide moved up at eye level, a slide with a two-inch thick glass. A face was visible beyond and a voice spoke by loud-speaker system.

"Who is it? Identify yourselves."

"Refugees," the Amazon answered. "For Haven's sake let us in!"

"No names!" the guard insisted. "I must have your names and check them with the index—"

The Amazon reflected quickly, trying to think of a name to use. She tried the trifle, Albus, however, let her off. "Raising his huge gloved hand he gave her a nod, and with a snatching power into the glass panel. The view went through the two-inch thickness, however, did not be seen. He was again more astounded when the gloved hand seized him by the throat and fingers tightened with terrifying power.

"Open the door!" Albus commanded. "And do it now!"

The guard struggled and writhed, but the more he did the more the gloved hand tightened remorselessly on his arm. In the distance, he pulled an automatic switch and the two doors rumbled slowly apart. Immediately Albus released his hold and he and the Amazon hurried into the vast interior of what had now been a railroad station.

Now the entire area was brightly lighted. The two doors led to the hundreds of clerks and similar workers who had to deal with the shelter's inmates. In the distance, the which had been altered in design and over the use of such things as the building to which shelter each stairway led.

"What about your names?" the guard asked.

"You can have mine, anyway," the Amazon replied coolly, turning aside her

head and face mask. "Or is that necessary?"

The guard stared at her crystal face, the glint in her violet eyes, the tumbled masses of her golden hair.

"The—the Amazon! I didn't—"

Suddenly his hand flailed down to the weapon he was carrying but before he had completed the action Albus slammed out his left fist. It lifted the guard straight off his feet, and he dropped on his face and stopped there.

The Amazon said: "I thought it would be known that I had returned. Her hand whipped inside her fur suit and yanked a device out from under the levelled it at the clerical staff as she advanced toward it.

"I'm not sure I know the face of it or to pass the night," she stated. "Whereabouts is the shelter which has fallen to and buried Miss Wilson? Harry on, somebody—answer!"

"There—," one of the girl clerks started, pointing to the central stairway which had been converted. "And Miss Brown—," she ventured as the Amazon swung away.

"Well!" The Amazon looked back over her shoulder. Albus beside her, lowering his face mask.

"I'd like to know that we don't all feel against it—like that guard. We'll take him back, especially at a time like this—"

"Have it till later," the Amazon interrupted.

She motioned Albus and together they hurried to the central stairway. The stairway the girl had indicated. Part of it indeed still was a staircase of the usual type. In fact, the two doors into the brightly lit underground. When they had descended 300 feet down shaft lined with gleaming metal, they came upon the underworld refuge they were seeking.

From end to end it was packed with men, women and children. Some were on the move with their belongings; others were sitting breezily—and to the left, a crowd was busy with electric drills. The Amazon hurried toward them, and the people, recognizing her, fell back a little at her approach.

"In this where the collapse is?" she demanded of the engineer in charge.

The engineer's face lighted at the sight of his business partner.

"Then it was true!" he ejaculated. "You're still alive, Miss Brown! Thank heaven for that!"

"Obviously I'm alive," she said irritably. "Answer my question."

"Yes, this is where we're trying to get through the engineer agreed. "It's a bad fall—Look for yourself!"

The Amazon was already looking. Where there should have been another shaft leading to lower caverns there was instead a large area of crushed metal plates, twisted steelwork, and crumpled rock. The whole shaft at this point had apparently gone rotten and craved.

"What happened?" she asked.

"Simply felled up," the engineer shrugged. "The falls in the lower cavern were too strong. The working shaft case was smashed to bits as well; you can see parts of it there sticking up. One of the people survived but only a few are hurt. We're in touch by radio and in another hour we ought to have it fixed."

"We'll help," the Amazon said quickly, stepping out of her furs. "Yes! You can't leave them!"

"Willingly," Albus agreed, and flung his fur suit aside.

## CHAPTER XIII

**T**he engineer and his fellow technicians came in to wonder for a moment at the mightily muscled stranger; then pressure of events forced them to work again. But this time it was the Amazon who gave the direction, not the chief engineer—and he was very glad to relinquish himself to her greater knowledge.

Whistling and grunting, the stonework was carried through the debris while the men and the Amazon hauled aside the heavy material which the feeble excavators could not easily grasp.

So, within 40 minutes a passage through the rock and rubble had been bored. The first party of the rescuee down through the narrow

space and drop into the cavern below. Here she found about 100 people. The metal walls sagged dangerously around them, the only light they possessed coming from the batteries with which they had been operating their radio.

The Amazon glanced over the assembly swiftly, then her gaze turned to those who were lying flat, their relatives or friends kneeling beside them.

"Chief! The Amazon for help!" she called. "We're in trouble. We're being pressed. 'She got crushed in the rocks. Can't let me in!'"

"She's dying, Vi," Chris whispered. "You take. 'She's in trouble. We're being pressed. 'She got crushed in the rocks. Can't let me in!'"

The Amazon glanced about her. Chris interpreted the action.

"My wife is in the use of the other cavern," he said. "Open the door for her."

The Amazon got up from her knees as Albus and the engineers, followed by others from the upper cavern, came down into the lower.

"Listen, you people," she said, raising her voice. "You can think of me as your life. You can think of me as the fact that many of you may yet die if you don't follow me from here on and where I lead you. I have been given. These shelters are critical! They have got to be rebuilt before it's too late. The first party are prepared to throw themselves into the





"To offend it. If only I had surgical instruments handy I could save her. But I can't be done otherwise. She can't live long."

"I have seen and cured worse than this."

The Amazon stared, and as did Chris. "Whatever you can do, Alna, do," the Amazon cried. "This means a lot to me—more than I can explain. As if she were my own daughter."

Alna nodded; she suddenly a queer change of expression came over her, as he gazed at Ethel. A look of tremendous intensity came on his features, while his red lips began to move. He became fixed and unblinking, his raised Ethel's head and shoulders and forced her to look at him.

"Don't speak, Miss Wilson," he said gently. "Just look at me, that's all."

Ethel obeyed, and motionless, the Amazon, Chris, and the others still in the covers watched. At last as they could tell, something like a miracle was being enacted before their very eyes—for gradually as Ethel remained rigid, her eyes starting into Alna's, her crushed lips began to heal and fill out.

The flow of blood ceased, Alna's skin appeared. Like a slow transformation in a movie she gradually became her normal figure again, was as robust as though she had never been touched.

"Good," Alna murmured finally, smiling and lowering his hands. "That last fellow, young fellow."

Ethel blinked, passed a hand over her forehead, and then looked down at herself.

"In heaven's name what did you do? she gasped. "Who are you? A healer or something?"

"Not in the sense that you mean it," Alna responded. "I am a soldier, the same as Miss Brant, but my science is of another order. We of my planet—whether you call Jupiter—believe that any material thing is greater than the mental state, therefore the mental power can force the material to obey it. That was what happened. My mind force I made you see yourself as you were before your accident. Your physical frame was compelled to yield to your mental outlook and—Well, you are as sound as ever."

Ethel got slowly on to her feet, her jaw sagging. "It's—It's much too deep for me," she confessed, "tiring up at delivery."

"Then just forget it," he suggested. "You glad I was able to help you?"

"You expect us to forget such a thing?" Chris exclaimed, gripping Alna's arm in gratitude. "You have a queer idea of our mentality on this world, Alna!"

"I have a great respect for it. Most of it, anyway," Alna responded.

"I just can't begin to say anything," Ethel murmured, her eyes fixed on the giant in girlish fascination. "My father told me about you, Mr. Alna—what kind of a wonder-man you are, but I never expected anybody like you!"

"We're meeting time," the Amazon said abruptly. "Alna, you are better able to deal with these injured people than I am, so I'm going to let you have your matter to deal with. As you being control it means that Turrington and his money grubbers have no place in this world, so I'll be back," she added, and turned away.

In a few minutes she had disappeared with the last of the seven, pushing her way through the people. After a while she gained the side of the chief engineer, with him, men, was still laboring to make the ship move.

"Where can I find Turrington?" she asked.

"He has his headquarters over there," The engineer pointed across the great space to a remote door.

"Trust him to choose a place where he can be reached," the Amazon murmured, her eyes gleaming.

"All right—thanks. And heaven's sake taking your orders from me."

"Quite me," the engineer agreed.

gun—then he suddenly realized whom he was addressing.

"Don't waste your time doing that," the Amazon warned, whipping her own gun from her belt. "Take me to Turrington."

He nodded and closed the door. The Amazon followed him across an expansive, comfortable furnished area. Turrington and his cohorts had certainly taken care that they would endure no hardships.

At one of the many doors lining the walls the door stopped and knocked loudly. There was no response.

"Thank you," the Amazon said, and rapped the door's gun from his belt, threw it away, and then gave him a shove, sent him sprawling. Turning to the door, he hammered violently upon it, still received no answer, and so turned her proton gun at it. There was a transient blinding flame, the dispersal of acrid fumes. A kick sent the door swinging inward and the Amazon stood on the threshold, staring into gloom.

She stepped quickly into the dark and in a split second, preventing herself being a silhouette, she switched on the adjoining room. Alna stood at the identical moment a gun aimed out of the dark and the bullet whanged close to her face.

"Wildly you were expecting me, Turrington," she commented.

Her eyes, scrutinized by now to the abrupt change, had the gift of seeing in the dark. She could discern the dim outline of a figure—around behind a big chair, the light catching his gun. He was peering blindly into the gloom, apparently trying to take aim.

Swiftly as a lightning the Amazon crossed the room, whirled the chair to one side, and was upon the startled troon, before he realized what had happened. Now in the dim reflected light from the chamber beyond he could see and girls' merciless face, steel grip on his wrist flung the revolver from his hand, a blow in the forehead he reeled back, with a heavy impact he crashed back against the wall.

The Amazon returned to the door, not it as best she could with its broken lock. She stepped on the light. Smiling coldly, she gazed at the marks like as he crumpled by the far wall, his head disheveled, lying in his eyes.

"Just what are you planning to do, Amazon?" I know you think that I was responsible for you being fired into space—but it was the wish of the people and the edict of the court.

The Amazon bowed her head slowly. "There is no place for you in my place, nor for those aversive eyes upon me, so I am going to remove you."

"I warned you that one day I'd take care of you all—and that is what I mean to do. Now get Aramide and Swainson."

"I don't know where they are!" Turrington objected.

"Don't let find them!"

"That shouldn't be difficult," a voice commented quietly, right behind the Amazon. "And drop that gun, Miss Brant."

Something hard dug in her back, she dropped her weapon, raised her hands, and turned. Morris Aramide and Swainson were crouched behind them, with revolvers. They had evidently crept in from the outer room and remained.

"Now," Aramide commented, "what do you want with us, Miss Brant? Or is it more to the point what we want with you?"

From what he said, either, you have decided to upset the Triumvirate, which is the government of we three men until the solar crisis has passed."

A surprised look crossed the Amazon's face. "So that's it?" she ejaculated.

"You are a thick skin," she said, one day the sun will recover and you will be able to spend your blood money!"

I wonder why you were so anxious to make fortunes out of a catastrophe.

"Certainly the sun will recover," Turrington stated. "I am convinced of it—and without help from you. In fact I don't think you'll be around to see that recovery or not." He smiled.

"Amused," Aramide, there's some strong such card over there in that cupboard. Get it and see what you can get rid of her through the shaft trap in the next room."

Aramide nodded and turned away, leaving only Swainson with his levelled gun, and the Amazon made a tremen-

dous leap and flattened Swainson to the floor.

Aramide twisted, his gun in his hand, but in a flying tackle the Amazon had reached him, and she had rolled around his legs. He crashed over, half rose, then sagged again before a blow in the face drove him under his nose.

"This sort of business is not for you much good," Turrington pointed his own gun. "I am recovered and ready in his hand."

Get Aramide and Swainson over there!"

She obeyed, but with one hand she squeezed down on the floor, holding him by the jacket collar. In so doing she covered herself against Turrington's fire. He waited in one side to aim again, but she waited for opportunity. Suddenly Aramide's flaming bullet burst through the air, crashed sound into the marble floor and knocked him sprawling. Winded and dead, he flung Aramide's body away from him, only to find himself in the deadly snare.

A black-clad knee was jammed in his chest and fingers with the grip of steel pinched down into his flesh and neck.

"You had no mercy on me, Turrington, or upon the people who met death in delivery to your rotten children," the Amazon murmured. "So now I shall kill you—so you deserve to be killed."

He lurched at the black-clad form, screaming down at him. He lunged and kicked and yelled, but he could completely to dislodge the grip on his throat.

The Amazon relaxed and contemplated the body. Then with a gesture of contempt she got to her feet and he looked at the other side, and she surprised she found on examination that Swainson was also lost. The smallest delivery of her foot had broken it. Only Aramide still lived, groaning slowly, his consciousness flinching down.

Aramide whirled him to his feet, and then pinned him hard against the wall with one hand at his throat.

"Listen to me, Aramide!" She dropped his face until he came back to awareness. "You remain alive out of three. I don't think you will be long, but I think you are too intelligent to be better with. You had great dreams for yourself, but you must make them come true. Forget your own selfishness as I order. If you don't, I'll kill you..."

She released him, he moved flinching his smashed nose and looking at her. Then she picked up her proton gun and fired two shots into the air to the open doorway. Just at that moment Alna came in with Chris Wilson and Ethel behind him. He greeted about the headquarters.

"Dead?" he inquired, looking at Swainson and then Turrington.

"Yes," the Amazon shrugged. "They deserved it. They got it. That has always been my code."

"It has the merit of being thorough," Alna commented, smiling. "And what do you propose doing now?"

"Since I have made myself the leader I propose spending the next few hours getting order out of this mess and having the others up and down the country look up to rights. It will be hard enough to get the ship moving, but worthy lieutenant I can find. Yet will be my right-hand man, Alna; then will be Ethel and Chris."

"And my wife," Chris interrupted. "She's okay. I found out that much. She'll be joining us shortly."

"The right," the Amazon stated over the room again. "This right you will remain headquarters. Swainson, the engineers and all those engaged on the machine, stay in the engine room, and the clerical staff. We'll hold a conference. After that, Alna and I have a journey to make."

After all the equipment of her laboratory had been transferred to the shelter, she and the Amazon left the ship with all the terrific energy of which she was capable, immediately after she held a conference and worked out details.

She worked so furiously that Chris, his wife, and Ethel just could not keep up with her. The machine was broadened over plans, worked out new schemes, had shelters tested if all parts were ready and then the Amazon herself took fresh instructions went out to the blast furnaces which were working at full blast when she finally found a new metal for protection, one capable of withstanding the vast pressure of the Great One.

Instead of several separate ducts one alone was decided upon, going down

... and knocked him sprawling.

propaganda overhead and follow me!"

"All of it," a man yelled. "We never did believe that big-mouthed money-bags were right!"

"All right, then. Here are your first orders. Get everybody possible up to the higher cavern and there stop for the time being. Some radio instructions for all those in deep caverns to come as near the surface as possible. Now give me a hand to get the injured out of here. I'll deal with Miss Wilson; you folks look after the others."

The Amazon returned to Ethel's side and coughed at the girl's head. For a moment Ethel's incoherence seemed to leave her and she gazed into the steady violet eyes dully.

"Hello—Aunt Viv," she whispered. "It's nice to know you're around again. Nobody but you can get things straight. I'm flattered, Alna."

The Amazon pulled down the cover which Chris had thrown over the girl's legs. She wondered how Ethel came to be alive at all, so mercifully had the rocks crushed her legs and body.

"May I look?" asked Alna quietly.

The Amazon glanced up. Ethel reached her eyes again at the new vista. For a second or two wonder averted her eyes.

"What—what a man!" she breathed. "If only—" She broke off, her face covered with pain.

"In the business beyond you, Miss Brant?" Alna murmured in the Amazon's ear.

## CHAPTER XIV

THE Amazon made her way swiftly through the throngs of people, then reached the door in the metal wall inscribed "Headquarters—Strictly Private," and hammered forcibly on the door.

It opened, and a man in uniform appeared.

"What?" he stopped, his hand on his











don't have to worry about Aristotle any more, he's been taken care of."

"Yes," said Alina. "The Amazon switched off and then settled at the controls. In a moment or two she saw Alina's machine being lowered. She followed at a more leisurely pace, thinking as she went. After a while she noticed tensity and decided to wait."

"Yes, that should do it," she murmured, conferring once more ideas.

## CHAPTER XXII

She brought the Ultra down on the other side of the mountain range some miles from the little depression where Alina had descended. Fastening her helmet back in place, she stepped out. There, Aristotle's dead body lay on the rocks outside, and there lay the journey on which she had come. To do it she had had to traverse a fairly high ridge which finally brought her to the summit of the mountain. The pick-a-back space flyer still satched in its box. When she came to within a few feet of the summit, she saw Alina and helped her into the control room. He gave a puzzled look as the back off

"Why didn't you lead the Ultra here?" he asked in surprise. "I would have saved a lot of trouble for myself. I was taking my risk of a solution," she replied. Then before Alina could comment she added: "Well, it's time we started the final move, isn't it? My hope is to detonate the staff in the 'man'."

"There here on it's my party," she said, swinging out of her space suit, "since I am the only one who can control the beam."

"Of course," Alina agreed. "Let's get the final details correct—by radio you set the pick-a-back machine off and point it to the edge of the solar atmosphere. Then by radio amplification you transmit your commands to your instrument operator and the instrument operator uses the sun, which should detonate the atomium. If she is lost in the doing it will not matter—but if you can save her for some future look all the better."

"The program exactly," the Amazon agreed. "Here we go."

She switched on the radio apparatus, able to tell by the dial and indicator exactly what was happening to the pick-a-back space-flyer and saw enough to be generally become visible through the darkening background. From here, however, the sun itself was not visible in his country—only half his orb hung over the mountain range.

The Amazon closed up. "Alina, you'd better get into a space-suit and go to some spot near here where you can see all the sun without difficulty. You'll need the space suit since the air is too thin to breathe. We have got to know exactly what happens and I can't leave these controls, nor can we move this vessel in case I lose the wave length."

"To find a convenient spot some where," Alina responded, taking one of those space suits from the locker and getting into it. Just before he moved on the helmet and passed upward through a pair of goggles the Amazon added:

"There's a good spot to the north-east of the range where you'll get a clear view. I noticed it, as I came from the Ultra."

"Right—And the moment anything starts happening I'll be back."

"Don't come until you see some good solar activity, has not to be Amazon advised. "We're not going to leave things half done."

Alina put her helmet in position and departed. He kept his eyes on the mighty red ball of the fading sun as he moved. He was a solitary figure in the gray expanse, heading toward the mountain range. When he reached it he paused, looking for a good position for commencing the Amazon's regulation to lead north-east he went that way—and came presently to a clear, level patch of land which dominated the at the summit near horizon. But he realized was the view he wanted, with all the sunlight from the western of the sun. He contemplated the little orb as he settled down to a rock. He was, he realized, taking the tremendous power of the atomium blast into his hands in one terrific effluence of energy there was the chance that the

sun itself would be blown in pieces and he calculated before he made more a dozen yards. If, however, a calculation had shown the energy dissipated itself over a less authority there he would behold a sight such as had never been seen before—the gradual extinction of a dying sun or former glory. If this came about he would have ample time in which to return to the ship before the last moments of his life as he as it had come for time immemorial before the sun had cooled.

He was not now how long he waited. Time did not seem to signify but as long as a result was forthcoming, he was content to pass the minutes concentrating on the radio and thought amplifying beam—and on to space somewhere between him and the back globe was the invisible pick-a-back machine which carried the look ahead of venturing the distance more and more.

Alina was even commencing to wonder if, after all, the whole gigantic scientific scheme was going to follow. The faint sight of a dim white glow amidst the darkness at the edge of the sun.

He had been looking at the sun for some time, but he had not seen it. He had been looking at the sun for some time, but he had not seen it. He had been looking at the sun for some time, but he had not seen it.

Light, blinding even, through the glasses, blazed down on Alina as the sun's face became stamped in blinding glare. Heat suffled through the void and he felt it through his space suit. He could look no more upon the giant giant of day. He had no full glimpse of the sun and came coming into being, together with the twirling promiscuous of new light and heat, then he turned and both sides left, then he turned and both sides left, then he turned and both sides left.

His emotions were a curious mixture of exultation and fear. On the one hand the mighty experiment had succeeded and life had been given back to the sun—a life which would come definitely through normal subatomic disintegrative process, and so the other

hand he wondered if the intense heat would turn the inward side of Mercury into a molten quagmire before he could reach the vessel where the Amazon was waiting. If his space suit became punctured by any means he was doomed.

It took him three hours to cover the distance—three times as long as his outward journey. Thankfully he stumbled into the control room and slammed the airlock. The Amazon dashed round from the radio board, then got on her feet, her eyes gleaming.

"Alina, we made it. We did it! Look at that sun!" She narrowed her eyes at the searing half circle visible above the mountain peaks.

"Yes, we made it," Alina gripped her shoulders thickly for a moment and then began to get out of his space suit. He asked: "I imagine that we saw heat for Earth and saw the south of all that?"

"The spot which her hand. 'There is no sun.' We know exactly what will happen. As the planet itself there'll be the greatest heat source of all time. All we would be able to do would be to float on the waters like a super-mountain sea with their submersion. I think that's a better plan, Alina, now our job is done."

"You mean?" There was an eager light in Alina's red hair. "You mean that you and I—? You're giving me your answer?"

"Yes," The Amazon contributed him frankly. "For the time being let us go to your planet and rest a while. It has begun to get out of the sun, and of course, the Ultra will be submerged in molten metal in a matter of minutes."

"All right, I'll be before we start do you promise me that?"

"Of course I promise you. I wouldn't touch with you otherwise." The Amazon turned to the wall clock, settled upon it and relaxed. "While you get the journey started I'm going to rest," she said, stifling a yawn. "Controlling that huge mass of mine was no easy job."

Alina smiled as he settled at the control board. "Do that. You've earned it."

He set the ship moving and the girl closed her eyes. Swiftly the machine climbed above the heavily melting plate and then turning away from the savagely brilliant orb of day the vessel plunged into the ether again.

Hour followed hour. Alina caught herself dozing at times, in spite of the control he had over himself. The Amazon slept peacefully. He considered her, smiled to himself, and checked the course.

In six hours, moving at the tremendous velocity the vessel was beyond the orbit of the most planet with Earth. But in the time it took to show on the white surface where the sun was melting the mighty heat was burning large, vast Jupiter.

Alina stirred from a long contemplation of his home planet and moved to the control room. She saw the Ultra. "Yes, you've been doing it, you've been doing it. Take a look at Earth—now the world in which we're going to live."

"The Ultra?" Alina's eyes were fixed on the Ultra. "The Ultra?"

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by Kathleen Moore Knight

Murder and mystery complicates the relationships of a group of Americans visiting the fabulous ruins at Chichen Itza, Mexico.

Coming Next Week